

We saw what happened in the House of Representatives. LIZ CHENEY, a stalwart conservative, ousted from her leadership position because she didn't pay homage to the former President. That is what is going on here. That is what is going on in the House, and that is what is reflected in this vote today, the refusal to even debate a bill to strengthen our democracy. Come to the floor, tell us what you don't like, tell us what you want to do. Do you really believe that what these State legislatures are doing is a good thing for our democracy?

I know it is easier not to have to talk about that, easier to ignore that, but we are not going to let this issue go away. We are going to be here week after week to make sure that we continue to push this For the People Act.

Now, in addition to the provisions to establish minimal protections so every eligible voter can access the voting booth, the For the People Act also has a number of very important provisions that are overwhelmingly popular with the American people. One of them is the incorporation of what is known as the DISCLOSE Act.

The DISCLOSE Act does a very simple thing: It gets rid of secret corporate money being plowed into our elections through these secret super PACs. You know what happened after the decision in *Citizens United* were two things. One, corporate money could flow in unlimited amounts into elections, but the Supreme Court at the time said: You can at least be aware of who is spending this money if you pass laws to make sure it is transparent.

In fact, a lot of the Justices who voted to overturn the *Citizens United*—excuse me, voted to allow corporate money in politics, who were the majority in *Citizens United*, have also said in that same opinion that they essentially expected Congress to enact laws to ensure transparency.

In fact, eight of the nine Supreme Court Justices in that case took that position. Yet the Republican leader, who in the early 2000s called for more transparency when it came to money being spent in elections, is taking the opposite idea: We don't want the public to know who is spending all that money. We want it to be secret.

I think most of us would agree and I know the American public agrees that they have a right to know who is spending millions and millions of dollars to try to influence their votes. We know that because survey after survey shows that Republicans, Democrats, and Independents all agree that they should know who is spending all of this dark money.

When you see a TV commercial that says, "Paid for by the Committee for America," you should know who is financing that ad to try to influence your vote. It is a very simple principle. Voters have a right to know. It was a principle agreed to by conservative jurists like Justice Scalia. And yet the position of the Republican Senators

today was: We don't even want to talk about that. We don't even want to debate that provision.

By the way, that provision, the DISCLOSE Act, passed the House back in 2010, and it came here to the U.S. Senate, and the Senate version of the DISCLOSE Act was debated on this Senate floor, and 59 Senators at that time voted to proceed with the bill.

You might say: 59 Senators, that is the majority; why didn't it pass? Because of the filibuster rule. They needed 60. And 59 Senators said: We want disclosure. And 59 Senators said: Get rid of secret money. But because of the filibuster rule, it didn't pass. It couldn't get to final passage on a simple majority.

If that had passed back in 2010, we wouldn't have our airwaves flooded with secret money today. We would have done what the American people wanted. The DISCLOSE Act is in this bill now, and once again, 11 years later, Republican Senators are filibustering the bill for the DISCLOSE Act.

They don't want the American people to know who is spending all of that money, mostly corporate money, flowing underground under the radar screen through our political system to try to elect candidates of the choice of whatever special interests are spending that money. They don't want you to know who they are, who is spending all that money to elect people. So why don't we all agree we are going to get rid of secret money? Apparently, we don't even want to debate that.

Another provision that is universally popular with the American people is the idea that we should have nationwide nonpartisan congressional districting. Let's draw congressional districts not based on politics but based on some nonpartisan criteria.

I think we all heard the line that it should not be the case that politicians are picking the voters. Voters should pick their elected officials. These days, people can draw congressional district maps with incredible precision with the use of computers. You can literally try and draw a congressional district designed to get exactly the electorate they want.

I don't think that is the way the Founders expected it to end up working, to get a computer that could draw these districts with that kind of precision and accuracy. And so one of the other important provisions in the For the People Act is, Let's draw congressional districts so that, we, the people, can make these decisions without the lines having been drawn to predetermine the outcome. That is also in this bill.

It also has some other important provisions that I support to try to reduce the impact and influence of big money contributors to allow people with lesser means to be able to contribute to elections and have some element of public financing so that the system is more geared toward the public interest than relying exclusively on the private

big contributions. That is another provision that is in the For the People Act.

Some people may disagree with that. Come to the floor, debate it, offer an amendment to get rid of it, let's vote. But what we saw today was a refusal to engage in the democratic process of debate in consideration of a bill. They used this provision, the filibuster provision, to block a bill to help protect and strengthen our democracy, and that is a sad and shameful day in the U.S. Senate.

But I am going to end with this. This issue is not going away. I was glad to see that even as every Republican Senator voted no, every Democratic Senator united together to say, We stand for the idea that we should have some minimal national standards for access to the ballot booth to protect our democracy and that we should get rid of secret money in politics.

Every Democrat said, Let's proceed to debate a bill that has those important provisions in it. And so we are not going away. This is a vote that may be a temporary setback, but it is my strong view that, at the end of the day, democracy will prevail in the sense that it will be strengthened and that the American people are not going to stand for a process that reinforces the Big Lie that was perpetrated on this country.

And so the good news—the good news, as I said, is every Democratic Senator said yes to moving forward, and we will find a way to get this done. We will find a way to protect our democracy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

RECOGNIZING JULY 1, 2021, AS THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 282, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 282) recognizing July 1, 2021, as the 100th anniversary of the Government Accountability Office and commending the service of the Government Accountability Office to Congress and the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 282) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

AMENDING THE SARBANES-OXLEY ACT OF 2002

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 2184 introduced earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2184) to amend the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 to institute a trading prohibition for certain issuers that retain public accounting firms that have not been subject to inspection by the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 2184) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 2184

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. TRADING PROHIBITION FOR 2 CONSECUTIVE NON-INSPECTION YEARS.

Section 104(i) of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (15 U.S.C. 7214(i)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)(A)(ii), by striking "the foreign jurisdiction described in clause (i)" and inserting "a foreign jurisdiction"; and

(2) in paragraph (3)—

(A) in the paragraph heading, by striking "3" and inserting "2"; and

(B) in subparagraph (A), in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking "3" and inserting "2".

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 1251

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader following consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 74, S. 1251; that the only amendments in order be the following: Lee amendment No. 2119.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I further ask unanimous consent that there be 2 hours for debate equally divided on the bill; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on the Lee amendment; that the bill be considered read a third time; the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as

amended, if amended; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 115.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Ali Nouri, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs).

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate, and if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all without intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; and that the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Nouri nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

NOMINATION OF KENNETH ALLEN POLITE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I intend to object to any unanimous consent request relating to the nomination of Kenneth Allen Polite to be an Assistant Attorney General at the Department of Justice, PN423.

Last week, at the Senate Judiciary Committee's Executive Business Meeting, I noted my intent to object to Mr. Polite's confirmation not on the basis of his credentials—I happen to find him well qualified for the position—but on the basis of the Justice Department's failure to respond to congressional oversight requests.

To date, the Justice Department has failed to provide a full and complete response to any of my oversight requests.

As one of many examples, on February 3, 2021, and March 9, 2021, Senator JOHNSON and I requested informa-

tion from the Justice Department relating to Nicholas McQuaid. Mr. McQuaid is Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division, the position Mr. Polite will hold upon confirmation. In those letters, we raised concerns about potential conflicts of interest in light of the fact that Mr. McQuaid was employed at Latham & Watkins until January 20, 2021, and worked with Christopher Clark, whom Hunter Biden reportedly hired to work on his Federal criminal case.

This arrangement presents a potential conflict of interest. A core function of congressional oversight is to ensure that governmental Departments and Agencies are free of conflicts of interest. That is especially so with the Justice Department and FBI. If conflicts infect them, those investigations and prosecutions—the very purpose of the Department's existence—could be undermined.

As a part of my oversight, I have requested a recusal memo for Mr. McQuaid. I have also requested to know, as a threshold issue, whether one even exists.

Attorney General Garland has failed to answer and provide the requested records. I have noted to the Department that in 2016 I received from the Department Andrew McCabe's recusal memo to illustrate precedent exists for such a production to Congress. Still, the Justice Department refuses to provide the same for Mr. McQuaid.

There is nothing more eroding of public faith than an unresponsive executive branch that believes it only answers to the President and not the U.S. Congress and, perhaps most importantly, "we the people."

This administration's continued ongoing and blatant lack of cooperation has forced my hand. Thus, unfortunately, I must object to any consideration of this nomination. My objection is not intended to question the credentials of Mr. Polite in any way. The executive branch must recognize that it has an ongoing obligation to respond to congressional inquiries in a timely and reasonable manner.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF BAPTIST HEALTH

● Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I rise today to recognize Baptist Health of Arkansas's centennial—a significant and commendable milestone.

Today, Arkansans are gathering to celebrate this institution and its staff that have been dedicated to providing exceptional faith-based healthcare to its patients, strengthening communities through compassionate service, and continuously responding to the ever-changing health needs of Arkansans.

On February 16, 1921, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention incorporated Baptist State Hospital to ensure Arkansans had access to quality, faith-